10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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REDACTEUR:

Dr. J. D. E. SCHMELTZ,
Directeur du Musée National d'Ethnographie de Leide.

Nosce te ipsum.

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Avec 12 planches et plusieurs gravures dans le texte.

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[title page (A)]

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HERAUSGEGEBEN
VON

Prof. D. ANUTSCHIN, Moskau; Prof. F. BOAS, New-York, N. Y.; Dr. G. J. DOZY im Haag; Prof. E. H. GIGLIOLI, Florenz; Prof. E. T. HAMY, Paris; Dr. W. HEIN, Donaufeld bei Wien; Prof. H. KERN, Leiden; J. J. MEYER, Wonogiri (Java); Prof. F. RATZEL, Leipzig; Prof. G. SCHLEGEL, Leiden; Dr. J. D. E. SCHMELTZ, Leiden; Dr. HJALMAR STOLPE, Stockholm; Prof. E. B. TYLOR, Oxford.

REDACTION:

Dr. J. D. E. SCHMELTZ.
Director des Ethnographischen Reichsmuseums in Leiden.

Nosce te ipsum.

BAND XII.

Mit 12 Tafeln und mehreren Textillustrationen.

BUCHHANDLUNG und DRUCKEREI vormals E. J. BRILL, LEIDEN.
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[Title page (B)]

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

THE 'LEPCHAS' OR 'RONGS' AND THEIR SONGS

BY

L. A. WADDELL, LL.D.

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The 'Lepchas' or 'Rongs', are the wild Mongoloid aborigenes of Sikhim, a mountainous tract, about 5000 square miles in extent, in the south-eastern Himalayas, which is wedged in between Nepal on the west, Bhotan on the east, Tibet on the north, and the plains of Bengal on the south. These people[1] are particularly interesting, as they are amongst the least civilized of all the Himalayan tribes[2]. They have preserved intact their tribal language and many of their primitive savage customs, on account of the peculiarly isolated position of their rugged country — shut in as it is by high wall-like ridges from Nepal and Bhotan, by the everlasting snows from Tibet, and by the deadly belt of *Tarai* jungle from the Indian plains. But they are now, however, fast dying out[3], and losing their identity by intermarriage with the swarms of more civilized Nepalese and Tibetans who have lately swept into their country, and especially so since it has been opened up under British rule; but neither their language or customs have yet been fully recorded, nor have their ethnological affinities been clearly ascertained.

Having lived amongst these people for several years in Darjiling and in their forest homes, I here attempt to rescue from oblivion some of their songs — a subject on which nothing has hitherto been published. This I do at the request of Professor A. GRÜNWEDEL, who has already in the T'oung-Pao[3] published a small dictionary of their speech, which he compiled from some missionary tracts, and the Lepcha Grammar of the late Mr. MAINWARING[4]; and he is at present editing Mr. MAINWARING's large manuscript: Lepcha-English Dictionary. My anthropometric and ethnographic materials bearing on the racial affinities of this tribe are too bulky to be included in the present paper. Here it may be sufficient to mention that the results of my observations are in many ways

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[1]) Except those in the extreme east, in Assam.
[2]) The pure Lepchas now (1898) number only a few thousands, and their language is likely to become extinct in two or three generations.
[3]) In 1896. Also a short Lepcha text in 1896, 526—60, and another in Bastian's Festschrift, Berlin 1896.
[4]) Grammar of the Rong or Lepcha. Calcutta 1876.

[p. 41]

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114 opposed to the views of Mr. RISLEY [1]), Colonel DALTON [2]), and other writers who have repeated the statements of the earlier travellers Drs. CAMPBELL and HOOKER, who mixed up the Lepchas a good deal with their Tibetan conquerors. For my results show, that

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A RONG OR LEPCHA.
(From photograph by Mr. HOFFMANN).

the so-called Khamba-branch of the tribe are not Lepchas at all, but Tibetan invaders from the Kham province of Tibet; whereas the Lepchas are decidedly of Indo-Chinese origin

[1]) Tribes and Castes of Bengal. Calcutta 1869, IV. p. b.
[2]) Ethnology of Bengal. Calcutta, 1872.

and seem to have entered their present country from 'Further-India' by way of the Assam valley; and they appear to be an outlying member of that group of wild tribes which are broadly known by their Indian title of *Naga* that is the hill-savages [1]). They are especially near the 'Ariang' or Mikir-Nagas of the Garo- and Kasia-hills, to the South of the Brahmaputra-valley, and have much in common with the *Ching-pó* or *Sing-po* — the 'Ka-chins' of the Burmese — as well as with that branch of the Malayan Indo-Chinese which has been named by the late Captain Founes, the Mon-Anam family. Even linguistically they do not belong to the Tibetan group at all.

The Lepchas call themselves '*Rong*' which may be considered as their true tribal name; and it means in their vernacular 'an occupant', in the sense of aborigines or autochthones of the area. They have no tradition of having come from any other country and know nothing of their origin. The earliest mention we have of them is in Tibetan history which records them as inhabiting this country on the Tibetan invasion about 250 years. The term Lepcha or properly Lapcha or 'Lapcho' is a Nepalese word, the contemptuous epithet applied to this tribe by their Nepalese neighbours. And it seems to me to mean 'the vile-speakers' [2]), because the Lepchas are the only tribe of the pre-Tibetan mongoloids of the Himalayas of Nepal and its borders, who have not adopted the externals of Hinduism and the Hindi dialect, the Parbatiya. The Tibetans, on the other hand, call the Lepchas, the 'people of the *Mon*-country' (*Mon-pa*, *Mon-rigs*, vulgarly *Mō-rik*), which is the general Tibetan name for the Lower Himalayas from Kumaon on the north-west to Assam in the south-east, as well as for Upper Burma. This name is doubtless related to the pre-Burmese inhabitants of Burma, the Mon or "Ialaigno" who are now pressed down to the coast-line of Pegu.

The current name of the country, namely "Sikhim" [3]), is also Nepalese. The Lepchas call it 'the *Ne* country', or Ne-lyang, which is usually interpreted trough the Tibetan as 'the place of caves'. Caves, however, are not numerous in the tract occupied by the Lepchas. Possibly this name was originally applied to the whole of this part of the Himalaya, as the tract adjoining on the west is still called the country of the *Ne*-wars, that is 'the people of *Ne*'; whilst the affix 'pal' of the modern name of the country of the Newars, to wit, *Ne-pal*, curiously forms the old Tibetan name for that country, the modern name of which, it seems to me, may be derived from the jurta-position of those 'Ne' and 'Pal' countries.

The language of the Lepchas can scarcely be said to possess a written character. The so-called Lepcha character I found in 1891 (when investigating the history of the country for my section of the Sikhim Gazetteer), was invented only at the beginning of last century [4]) by a Lama-king of Sikhim, with a view to convert the Lepchas to Lamaism. He

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[1]) From the Sanskrit *Naga*, a hill; the word, as applied to hillmen, covers the sense of naked hill-savages (*Nanga*), and the myth which associates these wild hillmen or *Nagas* with snakes or *Nagas* is, I believe, comparatively modern and Brahmanical in origin.

[2]) It has its parallel in the Anglo-Saxon epithet of ‚Welsh' or ‚the Jabberers', the contemptuous term applied by the English to their less civilised neighbours in Wales; also perhaps ‚Barbarian' from bar-bar, onomatopoetic for gibberish. Cf. TAYLOR's „Names and Places", London, p. 67.

[3]) The most trustworthy form is 'Sikhim', not 'Sikhim'.

[4]) This fact was recorded by me in 1892 in my Section of the *Gazetteer of Sikhim*, but during the process of editing it got transferred with other notes of mine to the Chapters compiled by Mr. PAUL (pp. 1—30, where it will be found at page 13 under the head of the Lama in question — Pag-dor Nam-gyal, who was the priest king of Sikhim, born 1680, died 1717 A. D.

212 114 designed it from the Tibetan and Nepalese forms of the Indian alphabet. It imperfectly represents many of the Lepcha sounds, and especially so in its romanized equivalents as given by Mr. MAINWARING, in his grammar above mentioned. This was particularly noticeable when I took down the spoken words directly from the lips of the identical men who had been MR. MAINWARING's chief informants. Their pronunciation of many of the words differed considerably from his record, especially in the vowel sounds. Mr. M. himself partially admitted to me this difference, when I confronted him with these men; but he excused himself by alleging that none of the Lepchas knew their own language properly, and he added, when he kept a school for Lepchas at Darjeeling, he never could get them to pronounce their own words aright!

114 194 Indeed, it was evident that the enthusiastic MR. MAINWARING, in addition to arbitrarily altering the Lepcha language, and subordinating the actual facts to his theories on the subject, did not distinguish clearly many of the common vowel sounds. [1]) To express however by any system of transliteration the rich vowel sounds of the soft Lepcha speech with its melodious cadences is extremely difficult. Most of the vowels are clearly diphthongs and triphthongs [2]), so much so as to suggest the possibility that they represent contracted forms of longer words from which some of the consonants may have dropped out in the wear and tear of use through many ages, when unfixed by writing. Little phonetic decay, however, seems to have occurred during the past 180 years or so, judging from the written forms found in the first Lepcha book, which appeared under the hybrid Tibetan-title, the *Tashe-sung* and which is believed to have been composed about that date [3]), certainly not earlier.

194 Moreover, it does not seem to have been recognised that the Lepcha speech is distinctly tonic, abounding in homonyms, one word having a variety of meanings according to the tone in which it is uttered. These tones I have not attempted to indicate here, as I have not had time to study the language in sufficient detail for this purpose. And in view of the comparatively recent introduction of the so-called alphabet, I have preferred instead of this latter to give here the spoken forms, in the roman character, as noted down phonetically by myself according to the generally recognized system of transliteration [4]); altough I also give the written text of the songs for reference.

192 The poverty of words in the Lepcha language in striking, but not more than one would expect in the language of such primitive people. Their scanty stock of verbal-roots

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[1]) Thus the word for 'a good spirit', which is clearly pronounced by the Lepchas as *Rām* or *Rāmu*, was not only spelt, but pronounced by Mr. M. as '*Rum*' or '*Room*'. Again *Tak* or *Tsak* 'the head' is never pronounced *Tuk* or *T'yuk* as spelt by Mr. M. Nor is *Pun-di* 'a queen' ever pronounced *Pundi*, which only obscures its etymological relationship to *Pun-so* 'a king'. Similarly *Kap* 'young', *Sak-dam*, 'world', *Se-mā* 'a bear', *Mosa* or *Mōa* 'flesh-meat', *Li'o* a 'cool hill', above about 7,000 feet elevation, *Kyung* a hamlet, '*Se-bar*' a musk-deer; *Puk-o'ok*, 'a jungle', *Yak-mun* 'a Lama', are never pronounced *Kup*, *Suk-dum*, *Se-mo*, *Mōa*, *Hlo*, *Kyeng*, *Se-bur*, *Pukyuk*, *Yuk-mun*, as given by Mr. M.

[2]) Thus the word for 'a spirit' seems to be often pronounced *Raedm*'.

[3]) The general nature of this and some other Lepcha books were first indicated by me (in Gazetteer of Sikhim 1894, p. 268; and Buddhism of Tibet London 1895 p. 166). A chapter of this booklet has been published with a Tibetan and German translation in the T'oung-Pao (1896) by Professor GRÜNWEDEL, who has shown that it contains a version of the *Suppāra Jātaka*. It seems however with Tibetan words and the Sikhimese forms of the latter. Nor can its authority for particular forms of words be taken too strictly, for it was never printed, and none of its extant manuscript copies are perhaps very old. Indeed most of these have been written by pupils of Mr. MAINWARING himself.

[4]) In generally the same as that adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society of London, except for the letter *ā*, and *ch* for *c*.

[104]

192 denotes the chief objects in nature and their relationships, the trees, plants and animals, and suffices for their easily satisfied physical wants. A characteristic and suggestive word is their name for a 'hunter' which is 'the flesh-meat-pursuing father' (*Maon-riāk bo*) and the word father itself means 'the giver'. There are so few abstract names, that it is almost impossible to express many abstract ideas in their language. Hence the first Lepcha 192 book, the *Tashe sung* or 'Scripture of the Lepcha God *Tashi*', which was composed by a 114 Tibetan Lama and which treated of Lamaistic Buddhism, was forced to borrow words freely from the Tibetan. Indeed the second part of this book-title is pure Tibetan. The large extent to which this borrowing has been carried on in the so-called Lepcha books was not fully realized by Mr. MAINWARING. For I found, on inspecting his manuscript Lepcha-English Dictionary, that fully half of the words which he believed to be Lepcha were in reality Tibetan, either pure primitive Tibetan, or the corrupt Sikhimese dialect of this latter language [1]), and the inclusion of such words tended to mislead in that it made the Lepcha appear somewhat similar in roots and structure to the Tibetan while it is in fact very different.

533 The very ancient nature of their songs is evident from the fact that they preserve 192 many archaic words and phrases, the meaning of which is now completely forgotten by the Lepchas themselves, who, however, still pride themselves in using them, although they no longer know their sense.

These archaic words and phrases usually occupy the position of adjectives or qualifying phrases, or nouns in opposition, which are prefixed or affixed to a word possessing a well known meaning, so that these archaic words are treated as redundant. They are called by Mr. MAINWARING 'figurative' expressions, and he instances as an example the phrases 'to close the eyes' and 'to be a stiff one' as prefixes to the root 'to die' whilst the affixes are considered by him to be mere 'expletives' and often without 'distinct signification'. To some extent they are perhaps metaphorical, [2]) though generally, I think, they may prove to be descriptive.

101 One of the commonest of these so-called *Tung-bor* expressions is the prefix to the 192 tribal name, namely '*Mo-tan-chi*' *Rong*. If you ask a Lepcha, what is a "Rong", what is the meaning of '*Mo-tan-chi*', he always replies that is has no meaning or sense whatever. To me however it seems, that the first two syllables are clearly the roots for 'Mother' and 'flesh' (*Mo* + *tan*); and *chi* although now ordinarily used for 'spirit' in liquor, may originally have meant animal spirits, 'inspirited or cheerful'. Thus the designation of the tribe would mean 'the (one) Mother-flesh (or consanguineous) jolly Lepchas'; if his hypothesis be correct, and it has much in its favour, the prominence herein given in the tribal designa-

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[1]) Thus '*So-mé-tap*' is given as Lepcha and the equivalent of Tibetan '*p'yag 'ts'al*, to pray; but both these phrases are Tibetan and neither of them really means to pray — the last being a salutation with the hands, and the former is the vulgar Sikhimese pronunciation of the Tibetan *gsol-ba-tab*, to make a request. Cf. JÄSCHKE's Dict. 279.

Such words will doubtless be omitted by Professor GRÜNWEDEL in editing this unquestionable valuable work of Mr. M. And it is to be hoped that the forthcoming dictionary may be arranged in the order of the European alphabet so as to make it more generally useful as a work of reference; for Lepcha, as we have seen, has practically no character of its own, and certainly to print its vocabulary in the order of the Indian alphabet seems undesirable, as the language is structurally so different from either the Indian or Tibetan.

[2]) The Kafir speech frequently employs metaphorical expressives. MAX MÜLLER's Science of Language 5th ed. II. 278.

101 tion to the word 'Mother' is interesting, because customs are to be found amongst the
192 Lepchas which appear to be vestiges of the primitive-social institution of Matriarchy or the mother-ship of clans; whilst this institution still flourishes amongst their co-related tribes
192 in the neighbouring Garo-hills, who trace their descent through their mothers and not through their fathers. Thus, as apparent vestiges of matriarchy amongst the Lepchas, I
581 find still surviving the usage of female suitorship, in which the young woman proposes marriage by offering to the man selected a basket of eggs; personal inclination in the choice of a husband; monogamy as a rule only relaxed in case the wife proves barren,
[531] tribal endogamy, avoidance of girl's mother, and not unfrequent Teknonymy whereby the father is called after his child — thus the father of Tak-li-ap (*Tak-li-ap bo*). Moreover all
103 the tribal groups (*a-git*), of which there are several scores, bear the affix 'mother'
192 (*mo*) [1]), although the proper name in this group title is territorial, the name of a particular valley or glen or hillside; and their grouping is itself merely territorial and has no significance as to marriage or true tribal division. Instances of such groups are 'The Wormwood mother' (*Tak-ñal-mo*), for the locality of this hamlet is exceptionally overgrown with wormwood; 'The Foot mother' (*Sang-dyang-mo*): this hamlet is one of the very few which lies at the *foot* of the tropical forge of the Tista-river; 'the Stockade mother' (*Tung-sung-mo*) this village near Darjiling occupies the site of an old stockade; 'the sloping-field mother' (*Ling-tam-mo*), 'the Namchi mother' (*Nam tsii-mo*). and thus we also have 'the Darjiling mother' for those born at Darjiling (*Darjeling-mo*). The only group of the tribe,
101 it may be added, which does not bear this affix of 'mother' is the highest section or
192 *A-den-pan-tso* [2]) from which, as its name denotes, the kings (*Pano*) and the ministers (*A-den*) used to be drawn — now however its members have a preponderating strain of Tibetan blood.

As instances of others of these archaic words and phrases whose meanings have been
192 forgotten by the Lepchas, but which seem to me to be apparently of a descriptive character, may be cited the words and phrases qualifying 'fields' and 'world', namely '*Ku-rak-mik*' and '*zor*'. In the former the words literally read 'bosom-stone-below', which would read 'the fields on the bosom of stone underneath.' The prefix *Ku* also is used for 'clothes', with the same meaning as Tibetan '*gō*', (goe) a coat, and *gur*, a tent, in either case would give the sense of 'the fields clothing the bosom of the stones'. Whilst the word joined to 'world' means 'rain' (*so* or *se*, which is literally applicated to the Lepcha part of the world as it is one of the rainiest sites on the globe; but probably it also meant originally the rain of the eyes or *tears*, and was perhaps thus used by the weary toiling Lepcha in the pessimistic sense of 'tearful world'.

[194] The homonymic character of the language also, would suggest the possibility that some of these archaic words are descriptive as in the tonic Chinese and Burmese, such as 'the *flat-thing* plate', 'the *round-thing* bottle' etc. It is to be hoped that this interesting question will be pursued by philologists.

776 The spirits and deities of the tribe are referred to in these songs, and require a little description, as they show the primitive conception of the Lepchas in regard to God, and the deification of natural objects and of their ancestors. The Lepcha gods and godlings are

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[1]) Not *Mung* as stated by Mr. Risley (loc. cit. IV. Appendix 80); this word means 'devil'.
[2]) The affix *tso* is interpreted as 'stock or lineage'.

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776 very numerous; but none of the many so-called Lepcha deities enumerated by Mr. Risley [1]) are Lepcha at all — all of them are purely Tibetan Lamaistic gods of Hindoo type, even to their names. The truly Lepcha divinities, on the contrary, are mostly of an animistic type. The majority are either the malignant ghosts of deceased ancestors or the spirits inhabitating natural objects — for the Lepcha views every animal, plant, river and stone as having a spiritual personality like his own.

The benevolent class of spirits are called *Rdam* in contradistinction to the malicious *Mung* who are supposed to cause disease, death and other disasters. The chief of the good spirits is *Te-shi Tak-bo Rdam* [2]) or "The Sky-existing Head-Father-Spirit", who also is called *Tashi-ting* [3]) or "The Sky-existing Lord". This ancient name for the chief Lepcha divinity was transferred to a Lamaist Saint by the Lama who composed the afore mentioned *Tashe-sung* in order to secure for his Lamaist hero the homage and worship of the Lepchas [4]). Many of the minor good spirits are of the nature of good fairies. One of these is a water nymph called 'The Rainbow Fairy' (*Tung-kung-mit*) who haunts the rainbow spray of rivers and cascades; and those who would fish at such places usually worship her [5]). Those spirits are sometimes entitled 'The Unseen' (*Mā*) and the prayer to them is called *Mā-ē*.

The malignant devils or *Mung* [6]) are of many kinds. Those who infest the depths of the forest are called "Angry fire" (*Mi-gdut*) and in appearance like flames of fire as tall as the highest trees. Those inhabiting swampy muddy springs are *Lang-nong* [7]) and those
[153] haunting rocks and caves are *Lang-ā'i*. These latter cause fatal dropsy in those persons who desecrate their haunts by lighting fires or soiling the stones in the vicinity. The especial abode of the chief Mung, who is called 'The father Devil', is at a rock amidst ruinous landslips on the gorge of Sivok [8]) where the great affluent river of the Sikhimese mountains, the Tista, rushes into the plains. Another celebrated Mung is "The gogo" (*Ā-kyong*) who inhabits a cliff in the forest of Gel below Darjiling.

Amongst deified ancestors the chief are Fodung Ting and Tek-kong Tek and their wives Ne-zong Ñyo and Ne-Kong Nal. These are the first traditional chiefs of the tribe, and the name Tek-kong, meaning 'to preserve independence', is suggestive of some struggle in
[622] which this legendary chief was successful [9]), though the Lepchas never seem to have developed any organized coherence or polity. Their so-called 'Kings' were only headmen, and lived in huts little better than the poorest members of the tribe.

Worship is rendered almost exclusively to the bad spirits and not to the good. For,

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192 [1]) loc. cit. 2.

[2]) *Te-shi* is from *Te* sky and *shi* to be. *Tak*, a contraction for *Tuk* head, and *bo* father — literally 'the giver'.

[3]) *Ting* (*A-Ting*) = lord or supreme, probably from *Ting*, to soar aloft (? hence *Ting-kyi*, the Kestrel or Sparrow-hawk). Compare with Burmese '*A-ting*', honorific exclamation to superiors.

[4]) The name in this book is altered to *Te-she*, the Tibetan *Shē* a judge being substituted for the Lepcha affix *Shi*.

[5]) Two classes of spirits incidentally mentioned by Mr. R. (p. 21) are 'personal demons' *Nung-lyan-no* and *Ke-fong-fi*, guardians of males and females respectively.

[6]) This word is perhaps related to the Chinese *Mo*, a devil.

[7]) This *Lang* is said to mean „fallen down" and not *Lang*, a stone, though this is doubtful.

[8]) *Sāk-fok*, literally impenetrable jungle, debris or poolings. This wild ravine is lined by the debris of the inner mountains and overgrown with densest jungle.

[9]) Other 'Kings', who are mentioned in songs, are Turve and Sākong. This last was said by the Lamas to have visited Hades and returned to tell the tale — a *Do-lok* — as noted by me in my Buddhism of Tibet p. 108.

776 say the Lepchas, the good spirits never do us any harm; it is only the malignant spirits which we have to fear. To propitiate the most malitious of the evil spirits are priests and [756] priestesses or rather wizards, all of whom are absolutely illiterate — unable to read or write. And their ritual is of the most elementary and loosest kind. They live like the [778] ordinary members of the tribe and have no temples, for the Lepchas have no images nor [777] any visible objects of devotion, though lately some of them occasionally worship in Lama-temples.

756 The priest is called *Bong-ting* or 'Lord-Oracle' literally 'Mouth-Lord' [1]); the mouth-piece of communication between the poor Lepcha and the Great Spirit. But more in demand than the priest is the priestess, the *Mâân* or *Mâân-mak*, who may be the wife of the Bong-ting, though not necessarily so; and both of these offices are usually hereditary. This priestess or priest is resorted to in every case of serious disease, for the Lepcha [753] believes that disease is always one to the machinations of an evil spirit and he has no faith at all in medicines. In the priestly rites there is no dancing as in the Shamanistic Bon of Central Asia. In their worship, which is of fear and not love, they invoke the *Mung* or other evil spirit by cutting a bamboo into pieces and sticking the pieces into the ground with bits of stone Then they propitiate the spirit with sacrifice of a fowl or a pig, and implore it to release its victim. Occasionally they perform sympathetic magic in cases of severe pain by drawing blood with a dry knife or spike of bamboo, without wounding the skin, like the Pawang wizards of the Malay Archipelago [2]). And so highly are these poor aboriginal priests esteemed, even by the immigrant Tibetans in Sikhim, that these latter, although professing the superior Lamaism, frequently condescend to employ these Lepcha priests and priestesses, in the belief that the latter hold especially close relations with the indigenous spirits of the country. It is a question how far this partiality for female priests may be a survival of the matriarchy before referred to, or whether it may be owing to most of the malignant divinities being female and so requiring a female priest.

533 Coming now to the songs themselves, we see that they are idyllic in character. Their words refer mostly to the inscrutable mystery of the origin and destiny of man and the primitive passion of love. It is curious to notice how they gratefully associate themselves [824] with the Bamboo, whose stout stem supplies them with the sheltering frame-work, walls and thatch of their huts, with fuel, bows and arrows; its larger joints afford water-jugs, cooking pots and pans; its smaller joints supply bottles, smoking pipes and flutes; its branches make a springy couch; its bark supplies baskets, umbrellas and ropes, and its tender shoots are eaten as food. The songs are sung usually to the accompaniment of a [534] flute or a sort of Jew's harp. This small harp is also used by the Nâgas and other Malayan races. It is made of bamboo and decorated by curving or burned in 'poker'-work with a plaited or basket-pattern. It is called *Tang-dyu* — the name *Tang* being apparently onomatopoetic for the twanging sound it produces. The flute called *Ivo-lit* is also of bamboo as its name denotes and it is decorated like the harp.

The melody of two of the chief of these songs I am able to give here through the

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[1]) This title is practically identical with the 'Gods' mouth (*Hla-k'a*) of the Bon religion. Cf. my Buddhism of Tibet p. 462. The term *Jok* or *Yok-mun* is usually applied to the Lamas and Nepalese priests, and may be a corruption of the Indian *Yogi*. An assistant-priest is called *Tyal-ba*.

[2]) Malay Sketches by F. A. Swettenham, London 1895.

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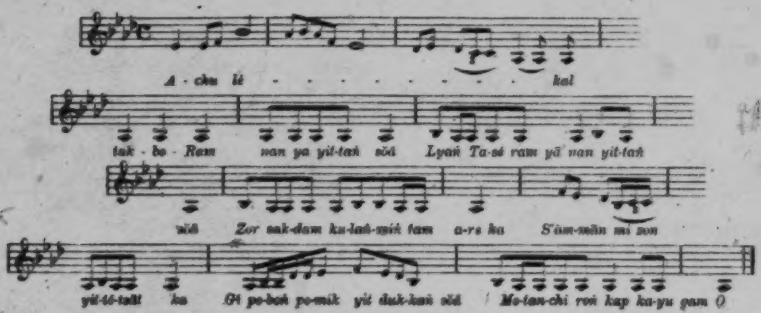
533 kindness of my wife who took it down in European notation. The first of these songs, *A-chu-lé*, shows traces of the very old pentatonic scale, says Sir Sourindro Mohun Tagore, to whom I showed it, and he adds in regard to this scale 'though it is observable in the Scotch ballads, it is the scale (still) in use amongst the Chinese, Japanese and Siamese'.

533 In the first song it will be noticed that the first verse has more even measure than
539 any of the others and is evidently the oldest and purest. In the second, the resemblance between the primordial grand mother and Eve is very striking. The third and last verses, with their numerous Tibetan words and references to Buddhist symbolism, are decidedly modern, though many of their words have retained their *Tsi-bor* expressions.

I.

A-chu-lé!

O Joy!


A - chu lé - - - - - - - - - - kal
tak - bo - Rum nan ya yit-tak sök Lyak Ta-sé ram yé nan yit-tak
sök Zor sak-dam ku-lak-mik tam a-rs ka S'ám-mán mi non
yit-tá-tak! ka Gi po-bok po-mik yé duk-kuk sök Mo-tan-chi rok kap ku-yu gam O

A-chu-lé!
Kél [1]) *Tak-bo Rum nan yé yit-tak sök*
Lyak Ta-se Rum yé nan yit-tak sök
Zor sak-dam ku-lak-mik tám ó-re-ká

S'ám-mán-mi non yé it-tak ka
Gi po-bok po-mik yé duk kuk sök

Motanchi Rok kap ka-yu gam o.

A-chu-lé!
Tar-ó'i-s'am Nam-byok kuk yé ro
Lok-bi-lok yé war-ka-bi ok yé ro-ó-re
Ka-yé sak-ó-re ta-lyók fo yé ma-o

O Joy!
The *kél* Head-Father-Spirit in the olden time
Made the earth. (He) The Sky-Existing One
Made in this tearful [2]) world the fields to cover the bosom of the stones.
When the *Sham-man-mi* men were made
And the *gi* jointed Bamboos and trees, at that same time were we
The sons of the (one-) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs.

O Joy!
The *far-chi-sham* mullberry [3]) trees were made,
The rice, the vegetables were made,
The running rivers with the *ge-o-re* fishes were made

[1]) This has been suggested to me as meaning „dark", that is to say „mysterious", and thus implying that it has been borrowed from the Indian *Kála*; but it seems to me to be a pure Lepcha word.
[2]) Also „rainy" (*zor*).
[3]) „Nambyong" is *Morus serrata*. The fruit also of „Nambong" (*Adina cordifolia*) is eaten.

539 *Lo-bik-dyol yit ku-do-rum yit tast kust*

Ya-t'it nam yit tast akit
Tast nam-rust yit ko nam yit mat o.

A-CHU-LE!
Mik-tak-mo ko-yit s'o-tik-mo yak yit-tast ata.

Lik-ser-mo tim-bru ka-ko-mu li-se

Ya-mam yit-tast akit s'al-man-ti kyou s'ok

Nu-man-ti kin s'ok ka s'al-li-mu li-li gó
Mu-s'al nan ka s'al-li-mu tyat ma lal-no yu
Yok kar-vo kup chum-bu gó s'u dik ma o.

A-CHU-LE!
La-ma-bor ka-bam lik-kar mâm dyak bam

Yat ma yan nat ka lik-la-mâm ka-s'ok.
Hyap-la-mâm dyak tyat ma bon nam yok 'nâ

Dâ-ne mâm tam-bo mi-tak-ding

Chum-bo kup nan mi-f'ik-mo s'u gâk lal-la.
A-chu-le! Sâm-pâ dup. Ta-s'i s'o. [1])

The *Sok-o-re* sky-birds were made. The ground *bag-*(dyol worms,
The *ku do-rum* insects and the rain bow were made
(All) by our first old great grand father.
(But our) *tast-nam-dong* [2]) troubles were made by our
(old first great grand mother.

O JOY!
Then the *she-ting* letters and the *mal-long-mo* books
(were made
The *ling-s'al-mo* symbols [3]) and the *be-ko-mo* augu-
(ries *li-se*
If by my *s'al-man-ti* feeble attempts and *lin-man-ti*
(childish blunders
My *s'al-li-mu* tongue has not been fluent
I pray you will not cut off my *s'al-li-mu* tongue
(For) I am (only) a *kar-vo* young boy singing standing.

O JOY!
With my *lik-ma-bor* folded hands and *lik-la-ma*
(folded hands.
With my not being able to unfold them
I beg you will not cut my *lik-la-ma* fingers and
(*kyam-lâ-ma* feet
(For) I am a *da-se-mam* paltry one, and a *mi-tang-ding*
(child
Struggling *mi-f'ik-mo* I what can I sing?

II.

EH-YE!

A NEW YEAR'S SONG.

Only the first and last verses of this song appear to be ancient, the middle verse contains many Tibetan phrases and words.

EH YE!
Zor nak-dam long-mik tâm a-re-kâ
Prut-tak-kam nak-kâ an-rong re
Put nam-mu lo rum gam nam-mu nam
Bya tast ne nak-kâ ong ne ne-nip gam.

EH YE!
All the Rong and their kin have collected this day
On the field-covered stony bosom of the tearful earth
To-day is the day of happiness
To-night is the night of strength (renewed for the
(New-Year).

EH YE!
Sher ts'o-di kik-tam t'ast tast ne
Chi-kar-mam s'ok [4]) *bi-kar-tâm du tast ne*
Pa-re gi-po-tasr nam opin ne om [5]) *tim-bre*
Yim-bu post lak-dam nhu dik ma.

We have *bi-kar-mam s'ok*, *bi-kar-cham* assembled
By the decree of *s'ar* fate and *Om* signs [6])
We sing this humbly standing up
For good luck for the *gi-po-tâst* coming year.

---

[1]) The last two phrases are Tibetan.
[2]) The *d* as usually in Lepcha is often written *r*.
[3]) *Tim-bre* from Tibetan *rten-'brel*, the Buddhist *Nidânas* or Concatenation of Causes of Existence: this is viewed by the Lepchas as a magical charm, and the *Tast-ber* expression annexed may have belonged to an older word for such charms
[4]) The written version has *s'op*.
[5]) This syllable is out of the place in written version.
[6]) Literally *tim-bre* = *Nidânas*.

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En Ye!	
Mo-tan-chi Ñoñ kap dam non bān	We are the sons of the (one) Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
So-lil-non po-bong yit duk kuñ su	We were made along with the *so-la-non* bamboos
	And the *ar-tasm* Bamboo-joints and the small reed (Bamboos [1])
Ar-tasm po-nuy duk kuñ su pa-e'or boñ	We the sons of the (one-)Mother-flesh jolly Rongs
Yit duk kung su Ñoñ kap gom yoñ s'u s'u.	Are of equal age (with the Bamboos)!

---

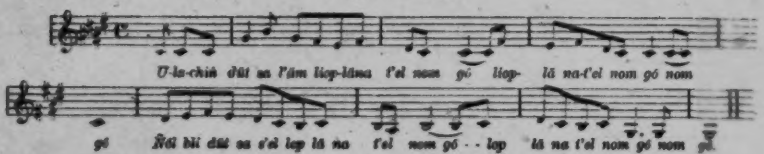
[574] [273] The following three songs are love-laments, the first by a languishing spinster and the others by lovesick swains. The reference in some of them to the "dear sisters" standing behind, relates to the present practice of the girls of the family who stand behind the guests to replenish their bamboo cups of *marwa* millet beer [2]).

III.

U-LA-DUÑ DÜT.

A LOVE LAMENT.

[533]


U-la-chiñ düt su l'ām liap-lāma l'el nom gó liap- lā na-l'el nom gó nom
gó Ñāl bli düt su s'el lap lā na l'el nom gó - - lap lā na l'el nom gó nom gó.

U-la dun düt su-l'ām liap-lā na-l'el nom gó.	I (am) a maiden [3]), like an unopened bud [4]).
Ñāl-bli düt su-s'el , , , ,	Like a supple shuttle [5]).
Suñ la lyun s'u fak-vuñ , , , ,	Like a whirling spindle [6]).
Ka-fer hi-von nuñ yāñ liap-lā diñ nuñ nom gó.	I stand a maiden, like a twirling spinning thread.
S'er la tak-kat su-s'el , , , , ,	Like a bright golden tassel.
Mit tuk-gum diñ-nuñ nom , , , , ,	A maiden I stand (forlorn) behind.
S'ung fo s'at la-bil-la liap-lā na-l'el nom gó.	I (am) a maiden like a tender coiled bud.
Tak-muk fo s'at nuñ nām , , , ,	Like a sorrowing *S'uñ* bird.
Sāk la ma rum na mo , , , ,	Like a loudly lamenting Takmak bird.
Lak la ma rum na mo , , , ,	I feel very sad!

IV.

THE PANGS OF LOVE.

Chin-che-ne tak-muk buk go ma l'ām ta-gun	Though I tasted not the wild chin-che-ne yam [7])
Kyuk-rān-lo lat duk Ñ-lim-bo lik nam-ni	I feel great pain in my *kyuk-rān-lo* heart.

---

[824] [231] [415] [222] [1]) *Po-cher* is a small reedy bamboo, grass which is a favorite fodder for cattle. The largest bamboo from which pitchers are made is „*Po*" or „*Poe*" (*Dendrocalamus Hamiltonii*, NEES & ARNOT). It is often 6 to 8 inches in diameter.

[2]) This beer brewed from the fermented seed of millet (*Eleusine coracana*) is served out in bamboo-pitchers or *poñ-t'at*, from which it is sipped up through a thin bamboo tube called *poñ-bis*, so called, because it is scraped and polished, from *po*, a bamboo and *bip*, to scrape.

[3]) Literally „Sister".

[4]) The folded bud of a growing shoot, such as the plantain or banana (*Musa sapiens*).

[5]) *Ñāl-bli*, a weaving rod.

[6]) *lam-s'u*.

[7]) *Tak-muk-buk* or „Forest yam". This is a very deeply set wild yam, growing 4 to 6 feet below surface and is only to be dug up with great labour.

539 *Fŭo-rŭo-lĭt kar-gak go-mŭ nun-na-gnak*
Ar-tan-tamm bĭt dak ŭ-tŭm-bu lĭk nam-nŭ
Chak-an-li ka-nak go mu-t'ŭn na-gnak
Mar-bu bŭm nŭ dat ŭ-tŭm-bu lĭk nam-nŭ.

Though I ate not the *fŭo-rŭo-lĭt* wild plantain.[1])
I feel great pain in my *ar-tan-tamm* liver.
Though I took not the wild *chan-gn-li* yam[2])
I am burned up with a fiery thirst.

V.

Ee Ye!
Sĭk-la mu-rum-nu lok la mu-rum-nu
Mĭ tam-gnam nam-t'ami dŭ-par-bu nok-ka
Kyak-ra-lo lat ŭ-ru ru fari-lă go
Ar-tan-tamm byat lo-kam kyĭk la go nan.

Ee Ye!
I feel very sad.
Listen O maidens behind! (respected) as *dŭ-par* great-mothers
I feel this *kyak-ra-lo* heart (of mine)
Is pierced through and my *ar-tan-tamm* breath[3]) is chill.

Ee Ye!
Go-rok ŭ! Sĭk la mu-rum-nu
S'ar t'a-di nak-bo rum ka nam ŭ
Om kĭt-tamm a'u nak-tam go dam bo cho
Nak-la mu-rum-nu lok la mu-rum-nu

Ee Ye!
I feel very sad.
O Head-Father spirit, creator of *S'ar* fate.
Tell me what is my *Om* destiny!
I feel very sad!

Ee Ye!
S'i-mĭni-mi kup gi-par-nok kin kup ma-lo nok
Ki-dak tamm-po-nam nam-rok
S'u mat nak dani go yak t'ŭ dĭk ma ŭ
Sĭk la mu-rum-nu lok la mu-rum nu.

Ee Ye!
I (am only) a *S'i-mum-mi* boy,
A *gi-par-nok* youngster. I implore you humbly standing
Why have you given me this *ma-lo-nam* and *tamm-la-nam* (sorrow
I feel [illegible] sad.

VI.

Fuk-tamm-mam na yam
Kŭk tamm nak na a'am
Mi-t'ŭk-mo a'u yŭk
Kŭk tamm nak na lam
Dak-mar-bŭm nam t'at
Tak-ta-li Nă-nok ba.
Zŭm-ma-li Fo-dak t'ŭk
A-yu ru-ma ŭ
Kyak-ra-lo lat dak
Ar-t'i ban' a'u yŭ
Z'am ta-f'i a'u yŭ
Gi-par-nim a'u da.

O you with the flowing hair!
O fair one with the neat parted hair!
Why have you *mi-t'ŭk* me charmed me so?
You fair one with the neat parted hair!
O old great grandmother *Tuk-ta-li Nă-nok*
You *duk-mar-bŭm* joiner of our breath
O old great grandfather *Zam-ma-li* lord *Fo-dak*
Praise be to your names!
(But) why have you *ar-t'i-bam* created me?
Why have you *z'am-ta-mi* created me?
Why have you *gi-par-nim* created me?
To suffer such heart-breaking sorrow?

The following seems a figurative declaration of affection by a youth of the valley the Singbali-river towards a girl of the Kirungpata-glen.

---

[1]) *Kar-gak* is the wild plantain (*Musa sp.*). It is full of large sharply jagged and irritant seeds. The cultivated plantain *Kar-dŭm* is seedless.

[2]) *Ka-nak* is a hairy round wild yam of large size, which grows near the surface of the ground, but its tubers cause intense thirst. Other wild yams found in Sikhim are *Su-um-buk*, *Sak-pŭ-buk* and *Su-li-buk* (?) probably the *Chak-an-li* of text.

[3]) Literally „Lungs".

[222 137]

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VII.

S'it-bū-li ut-lusk [1] *ci-bo rr to gó s'en,* O! who changed the course of the Singhali [2] river?
Mit tsat-gum ne-lem [3] It was the powerful fairy, the sister [4] who is behind?
Ki-rusk [5] *pū-lū ut-lusk ci-bo rr to gó s'en* O! who changed the course of the Kirungpata river?
Gi-yok-tauk fo-lat nam gó mi pa [6] It was a powerful like me a *gi-yok-tauk* young brother!

The reference to the rupee and the occurrence of several Tibetan words in the following, shows its modern character; though it may be founded on an older version.

VIII.

Kar-ce kap c'am-bu gya-lam-bi [7] *tpat nō na li* Oh come with me, a little *kar-ce* boy to the cross-roads
Dak-tam-pūr lum hat bo yat nāu yok s'ū And I will give thee a *ding-tam-pūi* [8] rupee
S'it mū-yi [9] *p'i-lūk a-t'ak tsak na gū-lū yo* Though I have taken refreshing *Shing-mai* foreign (snuff
Sāk la nan-run-bo lak la nan-run-no. [10] My heart is swelled with grief.

IX.

INHOSPITALITY.

539 *Yuk-mo lum-ret kūp kūn bū* When a Yangmo's door is shut
574 *A-nam tap nan-nō nan-mō* One cannot find food to eat
563 *Han-dō tak-rak ok kūn bū* But when his door is wide open
Kat- [11] *tpat a-nam tap no s'o.* One gets food to fully satisfy.

This may be paraphrased as follows: "Even when a Yangmo's door is open wide there is nothing to eat though plenty inside". It refers to the notorious inhospitality of the Yangmo and other half-breed Lepchas who have intermarried with the Limbu tribe and so treat the pure Lepchas disdainfully. Other such mixed groups of Limbus and Lepchas are the *Mang-mā-mo* (in the Kulhait valley), *Lak-som-mo* in the Rathony valley, and the *Ling-dam-mo* and *Sak-mi-mo*, all of whom are proverbially inhospitable. Finally I wish to acknowledge the assistance I received from Mr. D. MACDONALD in getting the Lepcha manuscript of several of the songs, and for help in interpreting several points.

---

[1] *Ut-lusk* is a 'branch rivulet'. [2] Or *ne-lim*.
[3] Or *Ki-rusk*. [4] Or *yuk*.
[5] Name of a river in Sikhim to the South of Darjeeling which through a landslip cut out a new course for itself.
[6] *Mit* is usually applied to a water-fairy. The phrase attached to this word means literally 'true understanding', but is said to mean 'behind'.
[7] This word is Tibetan. [8] Or *S'um-ma-li*. [9] Or *Mar-yum-no*.
[10] The *tam* of this phrase may either be the descriptive „flat thing", or it may be the Indian *tanka*, the rupee, as coins are not indigenous.
[11] Or *Kat*.

[436]

ORIGINAL TEXTS OF THE FOREGOING SONGS

9.

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[p.54]

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212

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212 [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

539 ८ ꠟꠤꠞꠣꠔꠤ ꠇꠛꠤ ꠔꠞꠥ ꠞꠥ ꠣꠞꠥ ꠛꠤ ꠔꠞꠥ ꠞꠥ ꠣꠞꠥ ꠛꠤ
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